
City Council

Notice of Motion

MM35.10	ACTION			Ward:All
---------	--------	--	--	----------

Distribution and Display of Graphic Images - by Councillor Sarah Doucette, seconded by Councillor Ana Bailão

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Sarah Doucette, seconded by Councillor Ana Bailão, recommends that:

1. City Council direct the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards and the General Manager, Transportation Services, in consultation with the City Solicitor, to assess options, both legislative and private, to:

a. regulate the distribution of print materials to private residences that contain extremely graphic images intended to shock, alarm, or cause dismay, including the potential for the prohibiting of the distribution of such print materials to private residences, for the purposes of addressing the potential of such displays to cause harm to members of the public, especially children; and

b. regulate temporary signs that contain extremely graphic images intended to shock, alarm, or cause dismay, including the potential for the prohibiting of such signs from being carried, held or displayed on the public right-of-way, for the purposes of addressing the potential of such displays to cause harm to members of the public, especially children;

and to report back to the Executive Committee in 2018.

2. City Council urge the Province of Ontario to limit and regulate the distribution of leaflets that contain disturbing images, using the means provided to them through Provincial Acts.

Summary

The City of Toronto is a diverse City that is accepting and tolerant of an open debate of ideas, even when controversial. Toronto is proud of the openness of its democracy, and that political battles are fought with words and not violence.

Recently some groups, namely the Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform, have entered into the public debate on contentious issues by using provocative imagery depicting grotesque and disturbing

graphics in order to relay their message.

These images have been printed on poster boards and banners displayed in the public realm and on leaflets delivered directly to people's doors. As a result, many children have unwittingly viewed these images and been left confused and disturbed by what they have seen. In effect, these groups have chosen to take away a parent's right to decide what and when it is appropriate for their child to learn about certain topics, and to view often disturbing content about them.

Since the distribution of these posters and flyers, Councillors have received many complaints from residents who have viewed the disturbing images themselves or whose children who have been exposed to them. Even residents who share the same point of view object to the methods being used by this organization. Many have asked why these images are being allowed in the public realm, and what residents and the City can do to protect children and the public interest in the future.

This Motion seeks to address those concerns.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM35.10